

UFBA Volunteer Member Field Experts: Rank & Role

Terms of Reference

Background

The UFBA's professional working relationship with FENZ means that we are often included in initial discussions with relevant FENZ managers to assist them with gaining an early understanding of where the gaps are for our members, how this might affect volunteers, and areas for improvement before going out for full consultation.

Additionally, the UFBA's proactive approach to identifying local and national trends, concerns, or issues from our membership means that we are often required to find evidence-based proposals before going to FENZ with the problem.

In both cases, we need to advocate for the needs of our membership and to do this effectively, we know the immense and diverse skills of our members need to be utilised.

Purpose

This Volunteer Field Expert Group aims to provide a forum that values and acknowledges the expertise within UFBA membership and better enables the UFBA to draw on this expertise, with a focus on **Rank & Role** for the primary purpose of providing input into the FENZ consultations processes on this subject and any other related processes.

To strengthen the voice of our membership and demonstrate our member's expertise to influence sector-wide FENZ policy and changes over time, especially where changes could impact the delivery of fire and emergency services in local communities.

The UFBA wants to ensure brigades are well-supported by FENZ to serve and protect their communities, and that any changes or implementation is made with the advice of volunteers.

Objectives:

1. Raise with the UFBA areas of concern or interest regarding Rank & Role.
2. Review, discuss and provide feedback or advice on FENZ policies, procedures, and consultation regarding Rank & Role.
3. Review, discuss and provide feedback or advice on UFBA initiatives that affect Rank & Role.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Members of the Group will:

- Be a point of contact for expert advice on the subject.
- Raise matters relevant to the group for the UFBA Management Team to consider.
- Treat any information disclosed by the UFBA as confidential, unless otherwise specified.
- Use their expertise from within the sector and outside the sector to provide feedback or advice on the subject being requested.
- Use an unbiased approach when providing feedback or advice.
- Ensure that the focus remains on the matter raised.
- Adhere to the UFBA's Professional Standards - [Professional Standards | UFBA](#).

The UFBA will:

- Provide opportunities for group members to discuss matters with each other.

- Provide a dedicated staff member to effectively administer the group and ensure all information/feedback/advice is collated and/or distributed accordingly.
- Utilise this group as a key information source for developing submissions, business cases, projects and initiatives.
- Make the UFBA Management Team available to the group for any issues that need to be escalated.

Focus for the Volunteer Field Experts Group – Rank & Role

This group is being established to support the UFBA's input into the FENZ **Rank & Role project**.

Project Background:

FENZ are formalising consultation with the UFBA in accordance with Section 36 (1) (b) of the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 and Agreements with Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

Between 2024 and 2025, Fire and Emergency and representatives of the UFBA have engaged in discussions regarding the Rank and Role Project. This Project aims to revise and unify rank policies, frameworks, and procedures across both volunteer built and natural brigades. It also seeks to address the inconsistencies in uniformed positions and ranks within Fire and Emergency.

To date Fire and Emergency has:

- *Completed initial scoping and planning of the project.*
- *Shared high-level information and the proposed approach.*
- *Collaborated with representatives nominated by the UFBA on the design and planning of the initiatives.*

This collaborative effort has resulted in an updated programme of work consisting of 6 initiatives. Further consultation will be undertaken over the coming months as the programme progresses.

Operating Process

This group is always on standby to engage as required. The group may be called to meet online to discuss a matter requiring discussion, or the group may be asked to provide written feedback only.

Subjects for discussion can be raised in various ways, including from UFBA Management and other members of the group.

Disclaimer

1. To support free and frank discussion, all members and UFBA staff agree to treat any information, content, or material disclosed as confidential, unless otherwise advised by the owner.
2. Personal information collected by the UFBA will be securely and digitally stored and will not be disclosed to any third party without the individual's permission.